



ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Political Communication Program



The Young Journalists' Club was founded and played a key role in promoting professionalism in the Croatian press and broadcast media.

Implementer: International Republican Institute (IRI)

Partners: Coalition parties, Government of Croatia, Croatian National Parliament, Young Journalists Club

Project completed June 2004

Establishing and maintaining communication strategies that are transparent, responsible to the public's demands and issue-oriented was one of the problems faced by the Government of Croatia. In order to communicate key reforms, USAID assisted government officials to improve communications skills and develop reliable mechanisms to promote effective intra-governmental communication and two-way communication with the public. At the same time, Croatian journalists needed to improve the quality of their coverage of political events in order to disseminate political messages in a balanced way.

USAID assisted the government and coalition parties to communicate more effectively internally and with constituents. Assistance included programs for county level officials to initiate and foster better coordination of reform efforts between the central government and local governing bodies. It also included survey research to assist the Government and political parties in defining their goals and identifying key issues. This USAID funded-program also conducted national public opinion polls that acted as a political barometer and reflected public attitudes regarding major program initiatives. Opinion poll research has been used for strategic consultations and communication training with government officials and political parties.

Results Ministers and Ministry Spokespersons improved communication on key reforms through training in strategic planning, proactive communications and message development.

The program worked with the Croatian Peasant's Party (HSS) and the Croatian People's Party (HNS) to develop strategic communication plans. Training for the Social Democratic Party (SDP) Youth assisted with the development of a long-term communications strategy.

The Young Journalist Club (YJC) improved political reporting. Several members were promoted within their news organizations, others moved to more challenging positions with competing media outlets and several members received awards from the Journalist Association for their work. Membership increased from 18 to 56 journalists that represent every major media institution in Croatia.

A series of pre-election public opinion polls for the Prime Minister's Cabinet and political parties within the ruling coalition government are being conducted.